

Appl. No. 10/825,773
Reply to Office Action of July 1, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The present invention is as follows:

A printing process employing a printing press comprising a plate cylinder, a blanket cylinder, a dampening roller and an inking roller, and employing a first printing plate material and a second printing plate material each material comprising a hydrophilic support and provided thereon, an image formation layer, the image formation layer at non-image portions being capable of being removed with dampening water or printing ink, the process comprising the steps of:

(a) mounting the first printing plate material on the plate cylinder;

(b) carrying out printing by supplying dampening water and printing ink to the first printing plate material with the dampening roller and the inking roller to prepare a first printing plate for printing, whereby the printing ink is transferred from the first printing plate onto a printing paper sheet through the blanket cylinder, the blanket cylinder contacting the first printing plate material;

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(c) then washing the surface of the blanket cylinder with a cleaning solution;

(d) drying the washed surface of the blanket cylinder;

(e) dismounting the first printing plate from the plate cylinder;

(f) mounting the second printing plate material on the plate cylinder; and

(g) carrying out printing by supplying dampening water and printing ink to the second printing plate material with the dampening roller and the inking roller, after the step (d).

Claims 1-4, 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pfeiffer et al. (US 5,447,102) in view of Kossak (US 3,735,702).

The present invention is distinguished from Pfeiffer et al. in that the present invention refers to a "development on press" process wherein dampening water and ink are applied to an image formation layer of printing plate material mounted on a press, to remove the image formation layer at non-exposed portions to prepare a printing plate for printing (e.g. see pages 9-11 of specification). Therefore, the invention process comprises the steps of (a) mounting the first printing plate material on the

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plate cylinder, and (b) carrying out printing by supplying dampening water and printing ink to the first printing plate material with the dampening roller and the inking roller whereby the printing plate material is developed and inked to prepare a first printing plate for printing. The step (a) means a step of mounting the printing plate material carrying no developed images on the plate cylinder and the step (b) means a step of preparing on the plate cylinder a printing plate with images developed by supplying dampening water and printing ink to the printing plate material.

The Examiner states on page 2 of the outstanding Office Action,

"With respect to claims 1 and 6, Pfeiffer et al. teaches a printing process for a printing press having a plate cylinder 11, a blanket cylinder 16, a dampening roller 19 and an inking roller 13, the process comprising the steps of mounting the printing plate material (D) on the plate cylinder, carrying out printing by supplying dampening water and printing ink to the plate (Pfeiffer et al., Fig. 1A, 2 and col. 9, lines 32-44), washing the surface of the blanket cylinder (Pfeiffer et al., col. 10 lines 18-20), dismantling the printing plate and mounting the second printing plate, i.e., replacing the printing plate (Pfeiffer et al., col. 11, lines 13-16) and carrying out printing with the new plate (Pfeiffer et al., col. 11, lines 34-59)."

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Applicants respectfully disagree with the above statement where underlined.

That is, the above statement, "the process comprising the steps of mounting the printing plate material (D) on the plate cylinder" is incorrect. Pfeiffer et al. discloses "the process comprising the steps of mounting the printing plate (D) on the plate cylinder", but does not disclose "the process comprising the steps of mounting the printing plate material (D) on the plate cylinder", to which the Examiner refers. In Fig. 1A, and col. 5, line 62 of Pfeiffer et al., Pfeiffer et al. discloses that printing plate D is mounted on the plate cylinder as carried out in a conventional printing process, which is quite different from the process as claimed wherein the printing plate material (i.e. printing plate precursor) as recited in claim 1, which is not printing plate, is mounted on the plate cylinder.

The printing plate D of Pfeiffer et al. is not the same as the printing plate material as required in claim 1, as the Examiner appears to conclude. The printing plate material as recited in claim 1 is quite different from the printing plate D of Pfeiffer et al.

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To explain in detail (i) the difference between the printing plate material as recited in claim 1 and printing plate D of Pfeiffer et al., each mounted on the plate cylinder, and (ii) the difference between the printing process as claimed and that of Pfeiffer et al., the following is noted:

(i) Difference between the printing plate material and printing plate D of Pfeiffer et al.

The "printing plate material" as recited in claim 1 is a printing plate precursor for preparing a printing plate, the printing plate precursor having no developed images to be printed. In the invention, the printing plate material is developed and inked on the plate cylinder after being mounted on the cylinder, by being supplied with dampening water and printing ink to prepare a printing plate on the plate cylinder. In contrast, "printing plate" D of Pfeiffer et al. is a printing plate, which has been prepared before being mounted on the plate cylinder of a press by a conventional plate making method, for example, by developing a printing plate precursor with a specific developer, the printing plate already having developed images to be printed before being mounted on the plate cylinder.

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(ii) Difference between the printing process as claimed and that of Pfeiffer et al.

Ordinarily, a printing plate, which has been obtained by developing an imagewise exposed printing plate precursor with a specific developer is mounted on the plate cylinder of a press, and then printing is carried out supplying dampening water and printing ink to the printing plate, which is a conventional printing process and is the case with Pfeiffer et al. On the other hand, in the claimed process, a printing plate material (precursor) is firstly mounted on the plate cylinder without being developed, then supplied with dampening water and printing ink to prepare a printing plate on the plate cylinder, and then printing is carried out further supplying dampening water and printing ink to the printing plate.

In view of the above, the claimed printing process is quite different from a conventional printing process of Pfeiffer et al.

In summary, Pfeiffer et al. discloses the conventional printing process, but does not disclose the printing process of the invention comprising the step (a) of mounting the printing plate material on the plate cylinder of a press, and the step (b) of supplying dampening water and printing ink to the mounted

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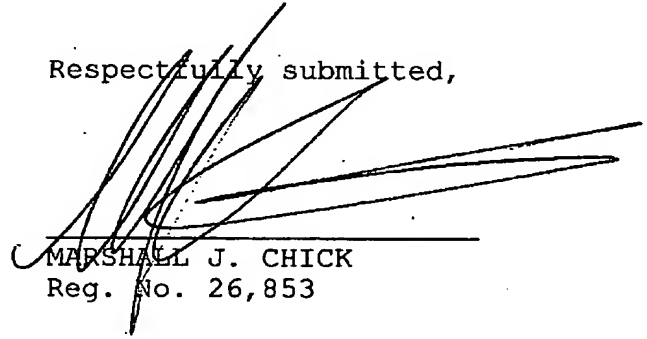
printing plate material to prepare a printing plate on the plate cylinder, which is different from the conventional printing process.

Kossak only teaches the steps of drying the washed surface cylinder and does not provide the missing teaching discussed above.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the present invention is not shown or suggested by the cited art. Withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

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